November 1, 2012

Jim Fries, PhD
President
New Mexico Highlands University
Box 9000
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Dear President Fries:

At its October 2012 meeting, the Commission on Accreditation (COA) reviewed the reaffirmation application for the baccalaureate social work program. The COA voted to reaffirm the program’s accreditation for eight years, with a progress report to be reviewed by the COA.

In taking this action, the Commission identified the following areas of concern.

Accreditation Standard 2.1.8: [The program discusses how its field education program] develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student’s employment.

Concern

Both the site visit report and the program response assert that all students in a placement where they are also employed meet the EPAS standard of different supervision and learning experiences. Still unclear is the issue of “in keeping with the waiver.” The program needs to clarify the details of the waiver referred to in the policy. Waivers that do not specify different supervision and learning experiences would not be acceptable.

Instruction

The program is asked to submit a report indicating the details of the waiver and how it relates to ensuring the role of student as learner with different field supervision and assignments.
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**Accreditation Standard 3.2.6:** The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.

**Concern**
While it appears that students can usually get answers to their questions and have their needs met, lacking are systematic advising policies and procedures.

**Instruction**
The program is asked to develop and describe written policies and procedures for academic advising comparable across the program sites.

**Accreditation Standard 4.0.1:** The program presents its plan to assess the attainment of each of its competencies. The plan specifies procedures, multiple measures of each practice behavior, and benchmarks employed to assess the attainment of each of the program’s competencies (AS B2.o.3; AS M2.o.4).

**Concern**
The assignments do not specifically provide evidence of measuring competencies and component practice behaviors. What measures are used to assess each practice behavior?

**Instruction**
The program is asked to provide evidence of how the signature assignments measure specific competencies and component practice behaviors.

**Accreditation Standard 4.0.3:** The program identifies any changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum based on the analysis of the assessment data.

**Concern**
The site team report and the program response address changes that do not appear related to the assessment of the 10 core competencies. How was assessment data used to make any changes in the curriculum?

**Instruction**
The program is asked to identify any changes made to the curriculum based on the analysis of the assessment data provided.
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Please submit three copies of the Progress Report no later than August 1, 2013 for review during the October 2013 COA meeting.

Sincerely,

James P. Adams, Jr., PhD
Chair,
Commission on Accreditation

JPA/ mdk

Cc: Alfredo A. Garcia, PhD
    Dean, School of Social Work